MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard **February 10, 2011**

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Jennifer Haskamp, Matt Hill, Renee Hutter, Rich Laffin, John Manning, Matt Mazanec, David Riehle, Steve Trimble, Diane Trout-Oertel

Absent: Lee Meyer (not excused), Mark Thomas (excused) **Staff Present:** Amy Spong, Christine Boulware, Becky Willging

BUSINESS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: 5:10 PM by John Manning (Chair)

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: – The agenda was approved as presented.

II. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – None were stated.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES: – The minutes were approved as presented. (Laffin, Trout-Oertel)

A. January 13, 2011 Annual Meeting

B. January 27, 2011 Public Hearing

IV. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Fort Road Federation will hold a public meeting about the Jacob Schmidt Brewing Company Historic District designation on February 14. A commissioner or two should plan to attend.

V. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **A.** January Design Review Statistics (see attached)
- **B.** February Legislative Hearing Notification
- **C.** The designation of the Jacob Schmidt Brewing Company Historic District is on a tight timeline. The consultant and staff are working on final drafts and edits. The Neighborhood Planning Committee with review the nomination on February 23.

VI. HISTORIC RESOURCE REVIEW:

A. 686 Bradley Street, Historic Resource Review to advise City Council. The property has orders to remove or repair. The Legislative Hearing Officer continued the item to the March 8 Legislative Hearing with a City Council hearing date on March 16. RA-SPC-0366 (Boulware, 266-6715)

Dana asked who owned the property. Staff replied, Deustche Bank. Trimble asked if there may be a connection to labor history with the original owner, Nels Okeson. Mazanec stated he had gone through the property two years ago and that the interior has integrity. Ferguson motioned approval of the staff recommendation. Mazanec seconded the motion. Laffin asked if there were a budget to hire a historian. Staff replied there is some money in the vacant building fund in DSI, but no recent discussions on property assessments for stabilization. There has only been talk of doing this, but no policy. Laffin asked about the role of the Legislative Hearing Officer. Staff replied the LHO will take the HPC recommendation into account when discussing the property before City Council. Manning asked if the LHO had asked that the HPC review this property. Staff replied, yes. Ferguson stated this building has a connection with other buildings in the neighborhood that is evident. This is one of the strongest buildings architecturally. He added that he worked in Railroad Island in the 1970s and remembered the owner threatening to paint the building then. The motion passed 11-0.

VII. NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

A. Downtown Façade Improvement Program - Make recommendation to City Council regarding applications for façade improvements. (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff gave a brief history of the program and read the report.

Pat Yeager, owner of Seestedt's, was present to discuss his application. He stated that the paint has been on the building for over forty years. He added if business conditions improve, he would like to restore the windows in the storefront. Manning noted that the full request has been recommended by staff. Yeager stated the corbels at the parapet really need to be addressed, as bricks are falling and the alley elevation if in bad condition. A gutter system will be required as well. He identified the boarded windows as an elevator shaft and noted that he removed the boards from the front windows last year. Yeager informed that the business occupied the whole building. Dana asked what his intentions were for the storefront. Yeager replied it is the next goal.

John Rupp, owner of the Lowry Hotel and the Athletic Club, was present to discuss his application. He discussed his plans for the Wabasha façade and the larger changes proposed on the Fourth Street elevation including a restaurant at the corner and the restoration of the openings and recreation of the canopy. He pointed out the 1930s ballroom addition and stated intentions of reinstalling the leaded glass. Also added were plans to amend the application to replicate the corner sign that was lost around WWII along with other metals that were never replaced. The building will become a residential hotel. Rupp stated plans to open a roof garden and basement lounge.

Rupp stated that he would give up the money for the Athletic Club in order to have it transferred to the work proposed at the Lowry Hotel. Manning asked if the corner sign was part of the plan. Rupp replied, not originally, but it may not fit in the budget.

Trimble asked if the ground floor had retail and how different the proposed configuration is. Staff replied, yes and the configuration differs with the number of doors and fully operable windows openings proposed on Fourth Street. Trimble asked about the prioritization of the items for recommendation. Staff replied they have been ranked for HPC consideration. Staff noted that the owners were allowed to speak at the last meeting and representatives are present. Rupp may request the withdrawal of the Athletic Club application. Laffin stated he hopes to hear from owners how the award will help carry out full restoration/rehabilitation. Manning noted the HPC will be making a recommendation to the City Council. Staff noted that the money is to help spur further economic development.

Staff asked if the \$475, 000 request included the sign. Rupp replied, yes. Staff noted they would need to review the sign proposal, as nothing was submitted with the application. Manning noted that the amount that was approved for recommendation last time was \$350,000. Staff reminded that finalized plans had not been submitted to the HPC. And the maximum amount for approval/request is \$475,000. Trout-Oertel asked if there were additional plans to make the Lowry Hotel project viable. Rupp replied that McNally Smith needed a residential campus and now occupy the third and fourth floor apartments and want another two floors. This is a stream of income for the building. Rupp added that this project hasn't been supported by the city and the Façade Improvement Program is the first support he has received. Rupp stated he will wait for the next round of the program for the Athletic Club, as it has occupants and won't suffer. Manning asked if he withdraws his applications without conditions. Rupp replied, yes, he plans to use the program to leverage investment. Trimble added that the Lowry Ramp is one of the oldest parking structures.

Katy Lindblad, resident of the Great Northern Building, and John Felton, Building Restoration Corporation, were present to discuss the application. Lindblad stated that the fifty-two owners want to be good stewards of the building and feel strongly about things that were not carried out when the developer cut corners. She added that with CCLRT coming to Lowertown, the condo association got a bid for work. This is a big project, as they are looking at long term fixes. Lindblad stated that city financing is important to the project, as the term is for 20 years and the bank offers only 6-7 years.

Felton stated that he wanted to respond to staff findings. Staff noted that they relied on 2002 documentation from the developer. Felton stated the developer had hired another masonry contractor who did not do restoration work. The curb was poured because it was cheaper than repair and other work was stop-gap and minimal. He added that the courtyard is in good shape now and his company had reduced the height of the unused chimney. He argued that 100% repointing is necessary, not cosmetic and that spot repointing would leave the building needing more work before the term of the loan. Mazanec asked if the recommended amount were enough to perform necessary work. Felton replied that it would not be enough for the building envelope. Laffin suggested using the bank loan for the remaining amount and tackling one elevation at a time. Lindblad stated that they wouldn't go forward with the work, as the home owners are on board to this once. She added that they had originally requested \$644,000 for the project, but reduced the amount to \$430,000. Manning asked if she was saying they wouldn't do the project at all if they were awarded less than the amount they had requested. Lindblad stated she would need to talk to the other households and reassess. Manning reminded the HPC has criteria to base their recommendation on. Manning stated the staff report was thorough and a help to guide the conversation. He added that the fourth item (Athletic Club) had been removed and asked if the commissioners were comfortable with the project ranking. Mazanec asked about the criteria. Staff replied that Seestedt's had demonstrated need and a lower cost. The Great Northern Building and Hotel Lowry would be a difficult decision. Trimble inquired about a City Council date. Staff replied that it hadn't received one yet. The HPC needed to consider how to assign the remaining \$200,000. Trimble stated he wasn't in favor of giving the remainder to the Lowry. Staff encouraged the commissioners to decide, as the projects and program were on a timeline. Trimble asked about the percentage of requested funds versus amount recommended to the Lowry and Great Northern. Laffin stated his agreement with the ranking and added that Seestedt's is at the entrance to Lowertown. Manning suggested that the \$200,000 be divided to increase the Lowry amount to \$350,000 and the remainder be given to the Great Northern, that way they would receive 73% and 76% of their requests. Haskamp stated her support for the suggestion and stated that \$350,000 is a reasonable amount for the Lowry proposal. Trout-Oertel agreed. Laffin asked what would happen if the Great Northern decided to go forward with their proposal? Staff replied that would be decided by the City Council. Trimble urged that the Great Northern should really try to lessen the deterioration of their building. Manning stated the motion was to follow staff ranking and modify and reassign the amounts. Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0

- **B. Smith Avenue Revitalization Plan** Presentation of the draft plan for the Smith Avenue Transit Corridor that, when complete, will be presented to City Council for adoption as an addendum to the city's comprehensive plan. (Reilly, 266-6618)
- C. Memorandum of Agreement update for the 3M site, by Monte Hilleman, Saint Paul Port Authority, and Andrew Schmidt, Summit Envirosolutions, Inc. Presentation of the landscape and streetscape plans and the interpretive program for the site. Monte Hilleman, Paul Kangas and Andrew Schmidt presented and discussed the layout and interpretive program for the former 3M site. Examples of educational and way-finding panels were displayed. Commissioners had questions about the content on the panels, location of the panels, plans for the remaining buildings and comments on the amount of surface parking. Laffin asked how people would use and interpret the campus. Manning asked if the Port Authority had received any reaction from 3M. Laffin asked about green space. Hilleman informed that those decisions would be made at the land use level and a two acre pocket park will be located on the south side of East Seventh Street. Laffin inquired about consolidating the parking or looking at multi-level parking. Hilleman stated it was a matter of cost. Trimble discussed the first three floors of building 20 could be used as a parking ramp. Hilleman stated this development will

benchmark energy and carbon performance. Trimble asked if the flag pole will remain. Kangas replied, yes, it is historically significant. Trimble added that the water tower should be saved.

D. Nominate an Awards Committee to plan the 2011 Heritage Preservation Awards along with the St. Paul Chapter of the AIA. Commissioners Hutter, Laffin and Trout-Oertel will serve on the Awards Committee. Commissioner Mazanec volunteered to take photographs and Chair Manning volunteered to assist with the script.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **A.** Education Committee (Ferguson, Thomas, Trout-Oertel) The committee will meet February 14.
- **B.** Greater Lowertown Master Plan Taskforce (Ferguson) The taskforce met on February 9 and will meet again on the February 16.
- **C.** Saint Paul Historic Survey Partnership Project (Trimble, Manning) Trimble reported that Historic Saint Paul is currently looking to gather neighborhood stories and photographs. Staff added that the contract has been signed and a GIS request has been submitted but delayed due to redefining the boundaries.
- **D.** Public Safety Building Mitigation The Penfield (Manning) Nothing to report
- **E.** 3M Advisory Committee/Workgroups update (Trimble, Mazanec) Nothing to report.

IX. ADJOURN: 7:40 P.M. Submitted by: C. Boulware